

**§ 245.1 Purpose.**

This part describes administrative procedures and policy used by the Corps of Engineers in exercising its authority for wreck removal. Procedures are intended to insure that the impacts of obstructions are minimized, while recognizing certain rights of owners, operators and lessees.

**§ 245.3 Applicability.**

(a) These procedures apply to the removal of wrecks or other obstructions within the navigable waters of the United States, as defined in part 329 of this chapter.

(b) This part does not apply to the summary removal or destruction of a vessel by the Coast Guard under authority of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1321), or to any removal actions involving obstructive bridges which are subject to separate regulation under part 114 of this title.

(c) For vessels which were sunk or wrecked prior to November 17, 1986, the statutory obligation to remove belongs solely to the owner (not the operator or lessee), and the owner's obligation to reimburse the U.S. Treasury for federal removal is limited to cases of voluntary or careless sinking.

**§ 245.5 Definitions.**

*Abandonment* means the surrendering of all rights to a vessel (or other obstruction) and its cargo by the owner, or owners if vessel and cargo are separately owned.

*Hazard to navigation* is an obstruction, usually sunken, that presents sufficient danger to navigation so as to require expeditious, affirmative action such as marking, removal, or redefinition of a designated waterway to provide for navigational safety.

*Obstruction* is anything that restricts, endangers or interferes with navigation.

*Responsible party* means the owner of a vessel and/or cargo, or an operator or lessee where the operator or lessee has substantial control of the vessel's operation.

*Vessel* as used in this part includes any ship, boat, barge, raft, or other water craft.

**§ 245.10 General policy.**

(a) *Coordination with Coast Guard.* The Corps of Engineers coordinates its wreck removal program with the Coast Guard through interagency agreement, to insure a coordinated approach to the protection of federal interests in navigation and safety. Disagreements at the field level are resolved by referral to higher authority within each agency, ultimately (within the Corps of Engineers) to the Director of Civil Works, who retains the final authority to make independent determinations where Corps responsibilities and activities are affected.

(b) *Owner responsibility.* Primary responsibility for removal of wrecks or other obstructions lies with the owner, lessee, or operator. Where an obstruction presents a hazard to navigation which warrants removal, the District Engineer will attempt to identify the owner or other responsible party and vigorously pursue removal by that party before undertaking Corps removal.

(c) *Emergency authority.* Obstructions which impede or stop navigation; or pose an immediate and significant threat to life, property, or a structure that facilitates navigation; may be removed by the Corps of Engineers under the emergency authority of section 20 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, as amended.

(d) *Non-emergency situations.* In other than emergency situations, all reported obstructions will be evaluated jointly by the District Engineer and the Coast Guard district for impact on safe navigation and for determination of a course of action, which may include the need for removal. Obstructions which are not a hazard to general navigation will not be removed by the Corps of Engineers.

(e) *Corps removal.* Where removal is warranted and the responsible party cannot be identified or does not pursue removal diligently, the District Engineer may pursue removal by the Corps of Engineers under section 19 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, as amended, following procedures outlined in this CFR part.